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*Wisconsin Has a Jobs Crisis*

Wisconsin has a jobs crisis. A lack of workers to fill skilled trades, lofty expectations from recent college graduates and public benefits are stifling a will to work here in our great state. According to a 2012 report produced by the ManpowerGroup, "Wisconsin will have fewer than half the metal manufacturing professionals that it needs by 2021..." Because Wisconsin is still very much a manufacturing center, we must continue to encourage our youth to consider opportunities for skilled-trade apprenticeships to help fill these jobs. It has also become apparent that many recent college graduates feel their degree entitles them to cushy, white collar jobs with \$50,000+ salaries. This is not the real world! In fact, many graduates will often have to begin at the ground floor until they learn the ropes and garner experience. Public benefits are also contributing to our jobs crisis. I recently requested a study from the Legislative Fiscal Bureau which revealed that a family of four, earning \$30,000 per year could receive \$36,000 in state and federal benefits! Some local employers have told me of potential prospects who turned down an offer because additional, non-cash earnings would cut into their benefits. As a state, we must continue to have serious discussions and encourage ideas to reform these social engineering experiments.

The latest Department of Workforce Development report states that Wisconsin ranks 5th nationally, at 3.6 percent, in average weekly private sector wage increases over the same quarter last year. Wisconsin is also one of only ten states with a 2015 average annual unemployment rate (4.6 percent) that was lower than when the recession began in 2007. Wisconsin is making great progress, but there is still a lot of work to be done to solve our jobs crisis.